

Received at Montreal 26 Nov 1877

REPORT

OF THE

GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE

OF THE

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,

TO BE

LAID BEFORE THE SHAREHOLDERS,

NOVEMBER 27TH, 1877.

LONDON :

PRINTERS: SIR JOSEPH CAUSTON AND SONS,
47, EASTCHEAP, E.C., & SOUTHWARK ST., S.E.

—
1877.

DIRECTORS,

ELECTED NOVEMBER, 1876.

Governor.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE
GEORGE J. GOSCHEN, M.P.

Deputy-Governor.

EDEN COLVILE, Esquire.

Committee.

GEORGE LYALL, Esquire.

RICHARD POTTER, Esquire.

EDWARD WILLIAM TERRICK HAMILTON, Esquire.

THOMAS HOLDSWORTH NEWMAN, Esquire.

Sir JOHN ROSE, Bart., K.C.M.G.

FRANCIS PEEK, Esquire.

MONTAGU C. WILKINSON, Esquire.

A GENERAL COURT of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay will be held, in pursuance of the provisions of the Charter, at the City Terminus Hotel, Cannon Street, on Tuesday, the 27th of November next, at Two o'clock, for the purpose of Electing a Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Committee for the year ensuing. The Ballot will commence at that hour and close at Four o'clock.

By the 7th George the III., cap. 48, no person can be admitted to vote who has not been in possession of Stock for Six Calendar Months, unless such Stock shall have been acquired by bequest, or by marriage, or by succession to an Intestate's Estate, or by the Custom of the City of London, or by any deed of settlement after the death of any person who shall have been entitled for life to the dividends of such Stock.

The Transfer Books of the Company will be closed on Saturday, the 17th, and re-opened on Wednesday, the 23rd instant.

By order of the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Committee of the said Company,

W. ARMIT,

Secretary.

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,

London, November 7th, 1877.

REPORT.

In compliance with the requirements of the Company's Charter, the Governor and Committee have issued the usual notice, calling a Meeting of the Proprietors for the purpose of electing a Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Committee for the ensuing year. In consequence of other engagements, which would prevent him from giving as much time to the affairs of the Company as he would wish, Mr. RICHARD POTTER has intimated his desire not to be proposed for re-election as a Member of the Committee, with which he has been so long connected.

The terms of the Charter requiring that the vacancy thus created should be filled up at the present time, the Committee have much pleasure in recommending the election of Mr. John Peter Gassiot, a large Shareholder in the Company. The Governor, Deputy-Governor, and the other Members of the Committee, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The Committee regret that they are unable to announce any improvement in the state of the Fur Trade, since the date of their last Report. Indeed, the Company's Autumn Fur Sale was marked by still greater depression than upon previous occasions, and it resulted in a further fall of about 20 per cent. in the prices of Martens, Minks, and other fine Furs. The proceeds of the sale amounted to £13,000 less than the sum realised at the sale of the corresponding period of last year, when nearly the same quantity of Furs was sold.

The Company's Ships have returned in safety from Hudson's Bay with collections, which in quantity compare favourably with those of the previous year ; and by way of Red River and St. Paul a considerable portion of the returns of the Northern Departments has already come to hand.

The total returns of Outfit 1876, appear to be in excess of those of 1875, but the full particulars of the Furs have not yet been received.

In the absence of complete accounts from the various Departments, and in the present state of the Fur market, the Committee do not consider themselves justified in recommending the payment of an interim dividend. It should be borne in mind that though the autumn sale has proved unsatisfactory, and has given a further indication of the depression of the trade, the bulk of the returns of Outfit 1876 is still unsold, and that it is impossible to predict, even approximately, the result of the sales to take place in the spring of next year.

During the past season the business of the Company abroad has been conducted without some of those drawbacks which were experienced in 1876. The steamers "Northcote" and "Colvile" have successfully conducted the transport service of the most important districts in the Northern Department, the water in the River Saskatchewan having for the most part been sufficiently deep to allow the passage of the "Northcote" over its shallow parts. The new steel steamer, "Lily," has made a successful trial trip, and will be employed next season on the upper portions of the river between Edmonton and Carlton, from which point to the Grand Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan, the "Northcote" will be employed as hitherto in transporting the supplies and returns of the trade.

Hitherto a considerable amount of expense has been incurred, and time occupied, in having goods and returns conveyed across the Portage at the Grand Rapids—a distance of about four miles—for shipment by the Saskatchewan steamer at the one end, and the steamer "Colvile" at the other.

With the view, therefore, of effecting a further improvement in the system and reducing the cost of transport, the Committee, after careful enquiry, sanctioned the construction of a Tramway at the Grand Rapids, which it is expected will be in working order early next season.

The Committee are of opinion that with the assistance of the steamers "Northcote" and "Lily" on the River Saskatchewan, the steamer "Colvile" on Lake Winnipeg, and the facilities afforded by the Tramway at the Grand Rapids, the Officers will be in a much more advantageous position than hitherto for carrying on the business of the Company with economy and despatch.

The Committee are glad to be able to report that there is every prospect of the Company's Marine Insurance Fund shewing favourable results when the accounts are made up in June next. A considerable amount of premiums has been earned during the year, while the Company have been fortunate so far, in escaping from losses in respect of the Insurances which have been effected.

With regard to the general trade of the Company, which has been so long depressed, the Committee regret that, as yet, they can report no improvement, but the fact that the harvest has been abundant both in Canada and the United States cannot fail, they think, to produce some revival in trade, in which the Company would undoubtedly share.

The Shareholders will be prepared to learn that during the past season no further progress has been made in the disposal of any of the Company's lands, or of the town lots at Fort Garry, to which reference has been made in previous Reports.

In conclusion, your Committee wish once more to remark that no efforts on the part of the Company's Officers abroad could possibly have neutralized the disastrous effects of a fall, unparalleled both in its extent and its duration, in the prices of the principal articles of the Company's trade, accompanied as it has been by a general depression of commerce which has affected all the subsidiary branches of its business. Everything is being done by economies in transport, by the curtailment of credit sales, by a re-organization ~~at all~~ the posts where the trade is found to be most exposed, and by other means, to ensure that the conduct of the business should be so regulated as to meet, as far as possible, the reduced value of Furs in this market. The Committee, indefatigably seconded by the Officers abroad, can only hope that the steps which are being taken will place the business of the Company on such a footing as may enable them to take the earliest and the utmost advantage of the revival of trade as soon as it occurs.

On behalf of the Committee,

GEORGE J. GOSCHEN,

Governor.

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,

LONDON, November 15th, 1877.

1877 NOVEMBER PROCEEDINGS MISSING.

